

NCLB WAIVER SUMMARY: ACCOUNTABILITY

PROMISING ASPECTS OF THE PLAN:

- There are clear consequences for Priority and Focus Schools that do not improve after receiving supports and interventions. The state will take over and may appoint a turnaround operator for any school that receives an F for four consecutive years or a D or F for five consecutive years. This ensures that schools that cannot quickly improve do not struggle indefinitely.

AREAS OF CONCERN:

- The procedure for calculating school grades does not require schools to narrow achievement gaps. Schools can receive bonus points for showing high growth among their higher performing students even if their lowest performers do not show high growth. Under this system, a school's overall grade could rise by the required amount even if within-school gaps stagnate or widen.
- The performance of specific student groups — low-income students, students of color, English-language learners, and students with disabilities — does not factor into school grades. The state has set separate goals for these groups, but the consequences to schools of not meeting these goals are largely limited to public notification, and writing and revising improvement plans.

What indicators are used to measure school performance?

- Proficiency rates in reading and math for students overall
- Growth/improvement in reading and math for students overall
 - For elementary and middle schools, growth is based on student-growth percentiles, or how much growth students are making compared with other students with similar academic histories.
 - For high schools, improvement is based on the percentage of eighth-graders who fail state assessments in English and math but pass the Algebra 1 and English 10 assessments in 10th grade, and on the percentage of 10th-graders who fail the Algebra 1 and English 10 assessments but pass by graduation.
- For high schools, four-year graduation rate and college and career readiness for students overall
 - College and career readiness is defined as the percent of students passing an AP or IB exam, earning college credit, or earning an approved industry certification.

What are the expectations for performance on these indicators?

- By 2020, all schools will receive an A letter grade (90 percent of students meeting state standards in reading and math, 25 percent college and career ready, and 90 percent graduating in four years) or have improved by two letter grades, overall and for each group. In the interim, all schools will receive an A or have increased by one letter grade by 2015.
- Schools are also expected to meet statewide Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) in reading and math, college and career readiness, and graduation rates. These AMOs are aligned with the school grading expectations.
 - For example, students overall are expected to improve their proficiency rate in reading from 77 percent in the baseline year to 83 percent by 2015 and to 90 percent by 2020. If this

were to happen along with improvements in math proficiency, college and career readiness, and graduation rates, the statewide grade for students overall would increase from a C in the baseline year to an A in 2020.

How are student groups included?

- Each group receives its own grade and must meet state AMOs for reading, math, graduation, and college and career readiness.
 - The groups included are African Americans, American Indians, Asians, Latinos, whites, low-income students, English-language learners, students with disabilities, the lowest performers (bottom 25 percent of students in the school), and higher performers (top 75 percent of students in the school).

How are overarching school determinations made?

- Schools earn between zero and four points per indicator. For certain indicators, schools can earn or lose additional points:
 - Reading and math: Schools can earn up to two bonus points if approximately 40 percent of students in the bottom 25 percent, the top 75 percent, or both make high growth. They can also lose up to one point if a certain percentage of students overall make low growth.
 - Reading and math: Schools can lose one point if the test-participation rate is lower than 95 percent.
 - Graduation: Schools can earn an additional point if 34.4 percent of four-year graduates earn honors diplomas, or if 13.2 percent of students who did not graduate in four years do so in five years. Schools can lose one point if 32.8 percent of students receive general or waiver diplomas.
- Total points for each indicator are then combined into a single index, ranging from zero to four.
 - For elementary and middle schools, reading and math each comprise 50 percent of the total.
 - For high schools, English and Algebra I scores each make up 30 percent, graduation comprises 30 percent, and college and career readiness comprises 10 percent. The college and career readiness metric will increase in weight by at least 5 percent each year, with the graduation metric decreasing in weight by the same amount.
- School and group grades are assigned based on an overall index:
 - 0.00-0.99=F; 1.00-1.99=D; 2.00-2.99=C; 3.00-3.50=B; 3.51-4.00=A.

How are Priority Schools identified?

- Any Title I school that receives an F or receives a D or an F for two or more consecutive years
- Tier I or II School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools

How are Focus Schools Identified?

- Any Title I school that receives a D but is not identified as a Priority School
- Any Title I high school that has a graduation rate less than 60 percent for two consecutive years

What happens to Priority Schools?

- Supports and Interventions:
 - Districts with Priority Schools must do a root-cause analysis, complete a data-driven intervention selection form, and develop a logic model to help identify appropriate interventions.
 - Based on the district's analysis, districts and schools select at least three interventions aligned to all turnaround principles. After the first year, they must use student and school-level data to determine necessary modifications. A suggested, though not mandatory, intervention to promote effective instruction involves barring ineffective teachers from being assigned to the Priority School.

- The state conducts at least two on-site monitoring visits per year. Also, the state conducts a Quality Review in Year 2, and schools must implement interventions based on findings in Year 3.
- Beginning in Year 2, parents of 51 percent of the students in an F school may petition the state board to place school in Year 4 status, which allows for earlier state interventions.
- Exit Criteria and Consequences:
 - Criteria for the exiting Priority Status: Maintain a C grade or better for at least two consecutive years, or meet the Reward School criteria for one year.
 - Schools that receive an F for four consecutive years or a D or F for five consecutive years will face state intervention, which may include assigning a school operator.

What happens to Focus Schools?

- Supports and Interventions:
 - Districts with Focus Schools must complete a root cause analysis, complete a data-driven intervention selection form, and develop a logic model to help identify appropriate interventions.
 - Based on the district's analysis, districts and schools select at least three interventions aligned to all turnaround principles. After the first year of interventions, they must use student and school-level data to determine necessary modifications.
 - The state conducts a Quality Review in Year 3, and schools must implement interventions based on these findings in Year 4.
- Exit Criteria and Consequences:
 - Criteria for exiting Focus Status: Maintain a C grade or better for the group that led to identification for at least two consecutive years or meet Reward School criteria for one year.
 - In Year 5, Focus schools are subject to state intervention.

What happens to schools that are not Priority or Focus? Does underperformance against goals trigger action?

- An A-C school is subject to action if:
 - It does not meet expectations, defined as being "2 letter grades or greater behind the overall group" for a student group or not meeting state AMOs, for American Indians, African Americans, Asians, Latinos, whites, low-income students, English-language learners, or students with disabilities.
 - For the bottom 25 percent student group, it does not receive an A or increase at least one letter grade before 2015 or two letter grades after 2015.
- These schools must modify school improvement plans. Title I schools in this category must also notify parents and guardians; modify federal grant applications; complete quarterly monitoring reports; and eventually receive a state Quality Review.
- A, B, or C schools where no student group fails to meet expectations are allowed to select and monitor their own interventions and to receive technical assistance from the state.

Will the state continue to require public school choice?

- The plan does not mention public school choice, although the state will continue offering choice to students who are currently taking advantage of it in accordance with federal requirements. Additionally, the state does have a choice scholarship (voucher) program for lower income families.

How are Reward Schools identified, and what incentives are provided?

- Title I elementary and middle schools making high growth among their bottom 25 percent student group and Title I high schools in which the highest percentage of students who failed the English

10 or Algebra 1 math assessment in 10th grade pass these by graduation, *and* those that graduate, in five years, a high percentage of students who do not graduate in four years.

- Title I schools that have the highest proficiency rates in English and math, the highest graduation rates, and do not miss AMOs for any student group for two consecutive years.
 - The groups included are whites, African Americans, American Indians, Asians, Latinos, low-income students, English-language learners, students with disabilities, the lowest performers (bottom 25 percent), and higher performers (top 75 percent).
- Reward Schools win bonus points in consideration for state competitive grants, receive greater funding flexibility, get a visit from the state superintendent, are exempt from certain compliance regulations, and may be honored at the State Capitol or be asked to present at State Board of Education meetings.